

**WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING

Oct. 20, 2003

Members Present:

Sandra Whitehouse
Chip Young

Water Resources Board Staff:

Connie McGreavy

Members Absent:

Mary Anne Barry
Sen. Sosnowski
Meg Kerr
Tom Sandham
Lori Urso

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Whitehouse called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Sept. meeting were approved.

III. ITEMS FOR ACTION

A. Education Committee Report

Dr. Whitehouse distributed the latest version of the report and explained that it had been reformatted. The matrix of education messages will be inserted. The draft report will be completed and circulated to committee members for review before the next meeting.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

A. Media Strategy

Ms. McGreavy reviewed the WAPAC recommendations analysis which indicates consensus among committees for the following:

- Information/data needs
- Monitoring
- Conservation Education
- Technical Assistance

Ms. McGreavy explained that information, monitoring and education were equally prioritized by five committees and technical assistance by four committees. From this information, it might now be possible to begin developing the Education Committee's "three barks". Ms. McGreavy stated that there are other recommendations that may only have come from one committee, but were, nonetheless, important. She will try to identify these by the next meeting.

Mr. Young reviewed the media strategy with those present, highlighting important milestones that are fast approaching. Ms. McGreavy stated that Mr. Sams would likely be the agency's spokesperson, but that an agency contact person in terms of the media strategy had not yet been designated. Mr. Young noted that November 15th was a deadline he selected for honing the three barks, which should be "clear, concise and consistent". Mr. Young then introduced the concept of having core groups for outreach, staffed by community leaders, government representatives, and others. Dr. Whitehouse asked whether it was feasible to put together another group, in addition to the working group that the Joint Advocacy & Funding Committee is planning. Mr. Young cited Jim Dodge, former President of Providence Gas Co., as a very effective public spokesperson for RI Grow Smart. Ms. McGreavy felt that it might be difficult to solicit more people, though the concept has merit.

Mr. Young then broached the topic of identifying target audiences for specific messages, as well as for anticipating objections to WAPAC initiatives. The agricultural community was identified as a constituency that historically opposes government regulation with water as a "hot button" issue. Ms. McGreavy noted that a representative of the farming community, who is also a member of several WAPAC committees, had written a letter to the editor of the Providence Journal Company "sounding an alarm" about the WAPAC program direction. Mr. Young asked whether this individual was the official spokesperson for the RI Farm Bureau. Ms. McGreavy stated that he was the Executive Director.

Dr. Whitehouse suggested that public information sessions should be planned for various groups including farmers, land trusts and environmental organizations. She added that the Water Resources Board needed to build a contact database and listserve for communication purposes. Ms. McGreavy suggested that the Coordinator of the RI Agricultural Education Coalition could be contacted to help form/deliver the education message to farmers. Ms. McGreavy reminded those present that Ms. Kerr was working on a calendar of workshops that the Education Committee could present at. Mr. Young indicated that there were several public information outlets to use, depending on resources available. Ms. McGreavy confirmed that funds were available for the media strategy for approximately six months (one day/week/month). Mr. Young reemphasized the need to identify the three barks ASAP and prepare background materials for local media.

B. Interfacing with the Joint Advocacy & Funding Committee

Discussion turned to the list of contacts identified for the working group. Dr. Whitehouse recommended Rep. Peter Ginaitt in his capacity as Chair of the Jt. Committee on Environment and Energy. Ms. McGreavy noted that Rep. Susan Sosnowski, Vice Chair of the aforementioned House Committee has been following the WAPAC program. Mr. Gary Ciminero, House Policy Director, was also mentioned as a potential candidate. All agreed that Prof. Art Gold of URI-Cooperative Extension would be an excellent spokesperson who is also knowledgeable. Ms. McGreavy will forward the names to the head of the Jt. Advocacy Committee and contact Prof. Gold.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

- A.** Ms. McGreavy distributed a grant notice that would be appropriate for collaboration among many partners. Dr. Whitehouse indicated that a big priority was to hire a grant-writer, or development director as part of the process.

VI. AJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM. The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 17, 2003 at 11AM at URI's Bay Campus.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie McGreavy
RI Water Resources Board

Date